

For Release

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D.C. Public Schools Ready for New School Year

D.C. Public School (DCPS) officials announced today that all of the system's 147 public schools opened the new school year on time as scheduled. Add to that, an additional four new Special Education Centers that will serve children who are emotionally disturbed also opened their doors today, Sept. 5, 2000. This marks the third successful school opening.

"We're looking forward to an exciting academic school year. Our classrooms are covered with certified or certifiable teachers, the textbooks and instructional materials have been delivered to schools and our schools have received extensive maintenance and repair work as well as an aggressive capital improvement program. I think all in all it has been a very good first day of school," said Dr. Paul L. Vance, Superintendent of D.C. Public Schools.

Superintendent Vance visited four schools in Southeast Washington today. He began the day at Birney Elementary School, followed by Kramer Middle School, Beers Elementary School and Anacostia Senior High School. He was joined by D.C. Mayor Anthony A. Williams at all four school sites while D.C. City Councilman Kevin P. Chavous (D-Ward 7) visited Kramer and Beers.

The school system had several issues to tackle this summer to prepare for students returning to the school buildings. In addition to attracting more than 570 highly qualified, certified and certifiable teachers, the district also focused on restructuring the Transportation Division and implementing a massive maintenance and capital improvement program.

For the past three years, a partnership between DCPS and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has resulted in an effort to upgrade and modernize school facilities. So far this year, 400 improvement projects have been completed involving nearly every school. A similar number of projects are planned during the remainder of the year. DCPS plans to invest approximately \$50 million this year in capital improvements of school facilities.

In preparation for the start of school, renovations included upgrades to bathrooms, painting, carpet replacement, boiler replacements, American with Disabilities Act projects and other infrastructure